

the pump. They want to know our borders are secure, and that our ports and airports are safe from terrorists.

It's time for this Congress to start addressing the priorities of the American public. It's time we stopped passing resolutions congratulating sports teams and started enacting legislation into law.

I urge my Democrat colleagues not to continue to languish as a do-nothing Congress, but to let us start enacting some of the legislative priorities of our constituents into law.

#### A CHANGE IN DIRECTION IS NEEDED IN IRAQ

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, General David Petraeus acknowledged that we will not see any significant improvements in the situation on the ground in Iraq by September.

When President Bush first proposed the troop escalation plan at the beginning of this year, he said we should know if it's actually working by the beginning of the summer. A couple of months later, when the troops were actually on the ground, the President revised that time frame, saying that we should have a good grasp if the plan is working by September.

Now we have confirmation from the President's top general on the ground that positive signs in Iraq will continue to be elusive.

The question now is, will the administration do as it has in the past and change the deadline?

Moving deadlines are simply no longer acceptable. President Bush has been promising for months that we would see significant changes come September, and since that is no longer possible, a significant change in direction is needed in Iraq.

It is time for the President and the congressional Republicans to realize that Petraeus is now admitting that no improvements will be seen by September.

#### ADDRESSING VETERANS' INVISIBLE WOUNDS

(Mr. KENNEDY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, our troops are returning from all over the world having suffered from many wounds, but many of the wounds that they're suffering from are not visible to the naked eye. Those wounds are psychological wounds. And tragically, our veterans system is not equipped, as we've seen this last week from a series by the Washington Post, to address many of those concerns.

Our Nation needs to be better prepared to address the psychological and

emotional wounds that our veterans are facing. And tragically, this country has not come to grips with the mental health crisis that even our own citizens face.

This Congress needs to address this problem. It needs to address it within the Veterans Administration, and it needs to address it for this country by passing mental health parity and by making sure that we address PTSD for our veterans, making sure we have oversight of the VA, and making sure that they address the needs of our veterans, both visible and invisible wounds of our Nation's veterans.

#### BUSH ADMINISTRATION BLOCKING DEMOCRATIC ATTEMPTS TO MOVE AMERICA IN A NEW DI- RECTION

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, over the last 6 months the new Democratic Congress has passed over 37 major pieces of legislation, many of them with bipartisan support, which have helped millions of Americans. Unfortunately, President Bush seems content with the status quo, opposing two-thirds of our forward-agenda.

Today, the President will again veto legislation providing for a serious Federal investment in lifesaving stem cell research, supported by 70 percent of the American people. Further stem cell research would give new hope to millions of American families across the country suffering from life threatening and debilitating diseases like lupus, juvenile diabetes and Parkinson's.

Earlier this year, we approved a defense authorization bill that includes a 3.5 percent pay raise for military personnel. The President's response was a veto threat. He believed a 3.5 percent raise was too much.

Mr. Speaker, there is never too much gratitude and respect we can show for our troops. We don't show gratitude with lip service, we show it by action.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected in November to move this country in a new direction, and my fellow Democrats are serious about real change. And I respectfully ask the President to join us.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

#### EMMETT TILL UNSOLVED CIVIL RIGHTS CRIME ACT OF 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass

the bill (H.R. 923) to establish an Unsolved Crimes Section in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and an Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office in the Civil Rights Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 923

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007".*

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

*It is the sense of Congress that all authorities with jurisdiction, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other entities within the Department of Justice, should—*

*(1) expeditiously investigate unsolved civil rights murders, due to the amount of time that has passed since the murders and the age of potential witnesses; and*

*(2) provide all the resources necessary to ensure timely and thorough investigations in the cases involved.*

#### SEC. 3. DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE CRIMINAL SECTION OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION.

*(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall designate a Deputy Chief in the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.*

*(b) RESPONSIBILITY.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—The Deputy Chief shall be responsible for coordinating the investigation and prosecution of violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred not later than December 31, 1969, and resulted in a death.*

*(2) COORDINATION.—In investigating a complaint under paragraph (1), the Deputy Chief may coordinate investigative activities with State and local law enforcement officials.*

*(c) STUDY AND REPORT.—*

*(1) STUDY.—The Attorney General shall annually conduct a study of the cases under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Chief or under the jurisdiction of the Supervisory Special Agent and, in conducting the study, shall determine—*

*(A) the number of open investigations within the Department for violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred not later than December 31, 1969;*

*(B) the number of new cases opened pursuant to this Act since the previous year's study;*

*(C) the number of unsealed Federal cases charged within the study period, including the case names, the jurisdiction in which the charges were brought, and the date the charges were filed;*

*(D) the number of cases referred by the Department to a State or local law enforcement agency or prosecutor within the study period, the number of such cases that resulted in State charges being filed, the jurisdiction in which such charges were filed, the date the charges were filed, and if a jurisdiction declines to prosecute or participate in an investigation of a case so referred, the fact it did so;*

*(E) the number of cases within the study period that were closed without Federal prosecution, the case names of unsealed Federal cases, the dates the cases were closed, and the relevant federal statutes;*

*(F) the number of attorneys who worked, in whole or in part, on any case described in subsection (b)(1); and*

*(G) the applications submitted for grants under section 5, the award of such grants, and the purposes for which the grant amount were expended.*

*(2) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year*

thereafter, the Attorney General shall prepare and submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

**SEC. 4. SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Attorney General shall designate a Supervisory Special Agent in the Civil Rights Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice.

(b) *RESPONSIBILITY.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—The Supervisory Special Agent shall be responsible for investigating violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred not later than December 31, 1969, and resulted in a death.

(2) *COORDINATION.*—In investigating a complaint under paragraph (1), the Supervisory Special Agent may coordinate the investigative activities with State and local law enforcement officials.

**SEC. 5. GRANTS TO STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Attorney General may award grants to State or local law enforcement agencies for expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution by them of criminal offenses, involving civil rights, that occurred not later than December 31, 1969, and resulted in a death.

(b) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—There are authorized to be appropriated \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2017 to carry out this section.

**SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—There are authorized to be appropriated, in addition to any other amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for this purpose, to the Attorney General \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2017 for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred not later than December 31, 1969, and resulted in a death. These funds shall be allocated by the Attorney General to the Deputy Chief of the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division and the Supervisory Special Agent of the Civil Rights Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to advance the purposes set forth in this Act.

(b) *COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.*—In addition to any amounts authorized to be appropriated under title XI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000h et seq.), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice \$1,500,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year, to enable the Service (in carrying out the functions described in title X of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000g et seq.)) to provide technical assistance by bringing together law enforcement agencies and communities in the investigation of violations of criminal civil rights statutes, in cases described in section 4(b).

**SEC. 7. DEFINITION OF "CRIMINAL CIVIL RIGHTS STATUTES".**

In this Act, the term "criminal civil rights statutes" means—

(1) section 241 of title 18, United States Code (relating to conspiracy against rights);

(2) section 242 of title 18, United States Code (relating to deprivation of rights under color of law);

(3) section 245 of title 18, United States Code (relating to federally protected activities);

(4) sections 1581 and 1584 of title 18, United States Code (relating to involuntary servitude and peonage);

(5) section 901 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3631); and

(6) any other Federal law that—

(A) was in effect on or before December 31, 1969; and

(B) the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice enforced, before the date of enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

Sections 2 through 6 of this Act shall cease to have effect at the end of fiscal year 2017.

**SEC. 9. AUTHORITY OF INSPECTORS GENERAL.**

Title XXXVII of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5779 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

**"SEC. 3703. AUTHORITY OF INSPECTORS GENERAL.**

"(a) *IN GENERAL.*—An Inspector General appointed under section 3 or 8G of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) may authorize staff to assist the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children—

"(1) by conducting reviews of inactive case files to develop recommendations for further investigations; and

"(2) by engaging in similar activities.

"(b) *LIMITATIONS.*—

"(1) *PRIORITY.*—An Inspector General may not permit staff to engage in activities described in subsection (a) if such activities will interfere with the duties of the Inspector General under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

"(2) *FUNDING.*—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. I thank my chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime.

Mr. Speaker, today is a very important day. What we're doing is recalling a difficult period in American history to understand the combined climate at that time that coexisted with fear and violence during the civil rights era. And so we have the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act.

The first thing I want to do is try to recapture, for the moment, all those who were not in the Judiciary Committee the day of the testimony, because it moved both Republicans and Democrats and visitors when we had Myrlie Evers, the widow of Medgar Evers, who was himself a victim of the violence that marked the civil rights era, talking to us about Emmett Till and how this youngster's life was taken.

And it was one of those moments in judiciary history that we were all electrified by the ability of our witnesses to recapture this moment in our history.

□ 1030

It was a remarkable hearing. I commend the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and others, including the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, LAMAR SMITH, and also I lift up the name of STEVE KING of Iowa. Everybody was moved by this determination that at this point in American history we are now moving forward at a pace that may not always be recognized, faster than we think. And the reason I say that is that we are now going back into history to make the

corrections that law enforcement could have and should have made at that earlier time. So it is to me a very powerful determination of the Committee on the Judiciary to bring H.R. 923 to the floor for the expedited action that is required this morning.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 923, which has broad bipartisan support.

At the full committee markup of this legislation last week, members from both sides of the aisle, as Chairman CONYERS just mentioned, and from all backgrounds and experiences joined together to ensure the swift prosecution of civil rights-era crimes, which were oftentimes ignored.

It is appropriate that the House consider this legislation today, Mr. Speaker. Last week marked the 44th anniversary of the murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers. Before his death, Medgar Evers was a primary, although unofficial, investigator of the Emmett Till murder. The committee was privileged to hear from his widow, Mrs. Myrlie Evers William. She movingly testified that the conviction of Medgar's killer in 1994, 31 years after his murder, gave a sense of hope to those who experienced this bleak time in our Nation's history.

Last week also marked an enormous victory in the fight to bring justice to unsolved civil rights-era murders. A Mississippi jury convicted former Klansman James Ford Seale for his role in the 1964 kidnapping and murder of 19-year-olds Charlie Eddie Moore and Henry Hezekiah Dee.

Unfortunately, time is running out for other unsolved civil rights-era murders. To date, the FBI has identified nearly 100 outstanding cases that still need to be solved. Many of these crimes are 30 to 40 years old. Evidence has been lost or destroyed, witnesses and defendants have died, and memories have dimmed. We must act swiftly to help bring long overdue justice to the victims, their families, and the communities that these brutal crimes affected.

H.R. 923 directs the Attorney General to designate a deputy chief within the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice to coordinate the investigation and prosecution of unsolved civil rights-era murders. The bill also directs the Attorney General to designate a supervisory special agent within the Civil Rights Unit of the FBI to further investigate these outstanding cases.

Finally, the bill provides much-needed resources to the Department of Justice, the FBI, and State and local law enforcement officials to prosecute these same cases.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank Chairman CONYERS and Representatives NADLER, FRANKS, SCOTT,

and FORBES, members of the Judiciary Committee, for their commitment to this legislation.

I hope my colleagues will support this much-needed bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the ranking member of the Crime Subcommittee, and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time on this side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), and I yield him such time as he may consume.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007. This important bill enjoys wide bipartisan and bicameral support. The bill will assist Federal, State, and local governments with the important task of solving unsolved civil rights-era crimes.

Mr. Speaker, at the recent joint hearing held by the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security and the Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties, we heard from six excellent witnesses. The most moving of these were Mrs. Myrlie Evers Williams and Mrs. Rita Schwerner Bender, both of whose husbands the Ku Klux Klan assassinated because of the import civil rights work they were doing. The Klan assassinated Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963, and Michael Schwerner on June 21, 1964. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) has asked us to take up this act now because it coincides with the anniversary of these two important events. In both cases it took government authorities decades before the killers were convicted of these brutal murders.

Unfortunately, these cases were not isolated incidents. There are dozens of cases, probably hundreds, like these, some of which have never been acknowledged, investigated, or prosecuted. Indeed, we don't even know how many people were murdered during the 1950s and 1960s, because retaliation was so common that many families did not dare report that their loved ones had been murdered. The FBI has identified more than 100 cold cases that should be investigated and, when possible, charges should be brought against the accused killers.

I support H.R. 923 because it will hold the Department of Justice and the FBI

accountable for following through on these investigations and prosecutions. The act requires the Attorney General to appoint a specific high-ranking employee in each agency to be accountable for this work. The act also requires the Department of Justice to report to Congress annually on the progress it has made towards solving these cases, and the first such report is due 6 months after the bill becomes law.

Lastly, the bill authorizes funds to the Department of Justice, the FBI, and when appropriate, State and local enforcement agencies, to investigate and prosecute these cases.

The FBI has already made a start in investigating these cases when it kicked off the Cold Cases Campaign in February of 2006 and expanded on this campaign in February 2007 when it solicited assistance from major civil rights organizations. However, there is still much more work that needs to be done, and Federal resources are necessary to do it. H.R. 923 will provide these necessary resources.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. HULSHOF).

(Mr. HULSHOF asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding me the time this morning.

Mr. Speaker, in 1963, while confined in the Birmingham city jail, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote a letter to eight Alabama clergymen regarding his recent demonstrations. In that letter, Dr. King eloquently wrote: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dr. King's words ring true today in this debate on H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act. We can no longer stand by and allow those civil rights cold cases to collect dust on our shelves. As a Nation, we owe it to the victims and their families and the country generally to provide them with long overdue justice.

Before I begin, I see waiting in the wings my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS). His diligence and perseverance on this legislation has been instrumental in getting us here today.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for considering this bill.

It is truly an honor to stand in league with my friend from Georgia as we began this bill, actually, this trek in the last session of Congress, and certainly he is a giant in the civil rights legislation and it is a privilege for me, Mr. LEWIS, to stand with you on this bill.

I also want to thank Alvin Sykes, who is the president of the Emmett Till Justice Campaign, and also former Senator Jim Talent from Missouri. Had it not been for them, I don't think we would be standing here today. Mr.

Sykes was inspirational in opening the Emmett Till case, for whom this legislation is named. He came to Senator Talent two years ago with the idea that ultimately spawned this legislation.

I think in the short time of this calendar year, a couple of months ago we commemorated as a Nation the 150-year anniversary of the Dred Scott decision. As the gentleman from Michigan eloquently stated a moment ago, there have been chapters in our country's history that are not proud chapters, and yet we cannot turn past those chapters in the book of history, but instead must focus and right wrongs.

For those of you who don't know the story of Emmett Till, Emmett was a 14-year-old African American boy from Chicago who spent his summer vacation with relatives in Mississippi. One afternoon, young Emmett spotted a Caucasian woman and allegedly whistled. For this indiscretion he was kidnapped from his house, brutally beaten, and thrown into a river with weights around his neck. And although Emmett's murderers were quickly arrested and placed on trial, the jury acquitted them and they walked out of the courtroom as free men. What makes this story even more tragic is that about a year later, one of the murderers confessed to his guilty conduct, without remorse no less, in an interview in *Look* magazine.

As an original cosponsor of this bill, I rise today to express my strong support for this legislation as I hope it will help bring closure to countless families who continue to suffer from injustices perpetrated so long ago. As has been noted, this legislation will establish an Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office within the FBI to investigate these pre-1970 cases in conjunction with, that is, in conjunction with, State and local authorities. H.R. 923 will also create an Unsolved Crime Section to prosecute these cold cases.

In my previous life as a prosecutor, I tried some three dozen or so murder cases. And with any trial, particularly murder trials, time is of the essence. And that is especially true with cold cases that this legislation addresses. Over the past nearly 20 years, we have had 29 unsolved civil rights murder cases that have been reopened, reexamined. Thankfully, 22 convictions have resulted. We have seen justice brought to the families of Henry Dee and Charlie Moore, who were only 19 when they were murdered. What were their infractions that caused this horrific end to their lives? Henry and Charlie were believed to have knowledge about African Americans importing firearms into the country. And for this James Ford Seale and a group of fellow Klansmen kidnapped Henry and Charlie, took them into the woods, brutally beat them, and drove them into Parker's Landing in Mississippi. Henry was tied to an engine block and thrown into the Mississippi River, still alive. Charlie had to sit there and watch his friend drown,

knowing that his fate would be no different. Their bodies were found several months later, Henry still tied to the engine block, Charlie to a pile of iron weights.

After more than 40 years, James Ford Seale was finally held accountable for his actions, convicted just last week for his role in the murders. A fellow Klansman was given immunity in exchange for testifying about Seale's role in the murders.

The Nation has witnessed the conviction of Edgar Ray Killen for his part in the murders of civil rights activists Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Cheney. Ironically, tomorrow, June 21, actually marks the anniversary of those murders.

We have recently seen authorities re-examine the murders of Johnnie Mae Chappell in Florida and Jimmie Lee Jackson in Alabama and hopefully, with the enactment of H.R. 923, many more.

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall once said: "Justice too long delayed is justice denied." I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation so we can continue to help heal the Nation, rectify the inequities of the past, and provide justice to those who have been seemingly forgotten.

□ 1045

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, in recognizing the gentleman from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, I can't help but observe that the difference between this crime, the Emmett Till crime of 52 years ago, and today is that passionately held beliefs about justice and fairness could cost you your life. There are only a few people left in America today who put their lives on the line knowingly in this struggle for justice, and the one in this body, the 110th Congress, is none other than JOHN LEWIS of Georgia, and I yield him as much time as he may consume.

Mr. LEWIS OF Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, (Mr. CONYERS) for those kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act is being considered today before the full House of Representatives.

I would like to thank the lead cosponsor of this bill, my good friend, Representative KENNY HULSHOF from Missouri, and my good friends in the United States Senate, Senator CHRIS DODD of Connecticut, and Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont for their distinguished support in this effort.

Again, I must thank Chairman CONYERS for all of his help and for all of his support in bringing this bill before us today. Also, Subcommittee Chairs SCOTT and NADLER for coordinating a powerful hearing on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the sake of history, for the sake of justice, for the sake of closure, the 110th Congress must pass this legislation.

On August 28, 1955, almost 52 years ago, a 14-year-old boy from Chicago, a

young African American boy, was visiting his uncle in Money, Mississippi. He was pulled from his bed in the darkness of night. He was beaten until he could hardly be recognized. He was shot in the head, and his body was dumped in the Tallahatchie River, all because somebody said he had been fresh with a white woman.

Several years later, an intelligent and dignified NACP leader named Medgar Evers was gunned down in front of his home in Mississippi in June of 1963. Some historians said it was the injustice of these unsolved two murders that began the mass movement in the American South that we call the modern-day civil rights movement.

Who can forget the NAACP leader and his wife, Harry and Harriette Moore, who were killed by a bomb on Christmas night as they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 1951 in Florida? Who can forget the two black couples lynched about 60 miles east of Atlanta in 1946, or the death of Lemuel Penn, a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve from Washington, D.C., who was a veteran trying to get home from Fort Benning, Georgia for a little rest. He was killed in 1964 as members of the KKK drove by him on a highway.

Who can forget Viola Liuzzo, shot down in Alabama in 1965, from the hometown of our chairman, Chairman CONYERS from Detroit, trying to bring nonviolent activists back to their home after the Selma-to-Montgomery march?

There are hundreds, maybe even thousands, of these crimes that were never brought to justice. There are murderers who have walked free for decades while the families of victims cry out for justice. Passing this bill is the least we can do. And we must do something to right these wrongs.

I will never forget the three civil rights workers, three young men I knew, Andy Goodman, James Chaney and Mickey Schwerner. They came to Mississippi with a simple mission, to register as many black voters as possible. They were stopped, arrested, taken to jail. Later that night, June 21, 1964, they were taken from jail by the sheriff and his deputy, turned over to the Klan, where they were beaten, shot and killed. They didn't die in Vietnam. They didn't die in Eastern Europe. They died right here in the United States. They died in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Viola Liuzzo didn't die on a road or some street in Baghdad, she died right there in Alabama on Highway 80. Lemuel Penn, Medgar Evers, Emmett Till and countless others didn't die in the Middle East; they died right here in our own country fighting for simple justice.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation, we have a mission, we have a mandate. The blood of hundreds of innocent men and women is calling out to us. Then, no one came to their aid. But today we can help make it right. Let us move to

close this dark chapter in our history. Let us try to wash away the stains on our democracy. So I call on all of my colleagues to pass this legislation and pass it today.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letters of support for H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act.

LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR  
CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW,  
Washington, DC, June 18, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: I am writing on behalf of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to express our strong support for H.R. 923/S. 535, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act. The bill, sponsored by Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, will give the U.S. Department of Justice the funding and tools necessary to investigate and prosecute civil rights era murders.

Ever since our founding by President John F. Kennedy in 1963, the Lawyers' Committee has sought to attain equal justice under law for all Americans, and the Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act is an important step in continuing that mission.

We are hopeful that the House of Representatives will pass the bill this week, as June 21 represents an incredibly symbolic day in the history of the civil rights movement. On that date in 1964, KKK member Edgar Ray Killen assembled a mob to hunt down three civil rights workers in Mississippi. The victims' names were James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. Those young men sacrificed their lives in pursuit of equal rights for all Americans, yet their killer roamed free for decades until a court finally convicted him on June 21, 2005.

We urge Congress to mark this important anniversary by passing H.R. 923.

The bill assigns offices within the Justice Department the specific responsibility of investigating and prosecuting civil rights murders before 1970. Then, civil rights murder cases that went to trial often ended in hung juries. However, today, different attitudes and improved race relations could result in color-blind justice, and technological advancements could allow prosecutors to present more persuasive evidence at trial.

To this end, H.R. 923 will provide the Justice Department with \$11.5 million in funds to carry out their duties, a sum publicly supported by a D.O.J. representative at a recent House subcommittee hearing.

At that same hearing, Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of slain civil rights worker Medgar Evers, spoke in support of the bill. Her husband was assassinated in 1963, and three decades later, a jury convicted 74 year-old Byron de la Beckwith of the murder, proof that justice knows no time limitations.

Although the Lawyers' Committee and Americans-at-large are thankful that the Evers family and others have received some level of closure, we know that countless American families are still waiting to see justice served. Just last week, a federal jury convicted James Ford Seale of two counts of kidnapping in relation to the 1964 murders of two African-American teenagers. Passage of the Emmett Till Unsolved Crimes Act will help the Justice Department investigate and prosecute cases similar to the Killen, Seale, and De la Beckwith trials.

With your support of this measure, aging murderers who have subverted our legal system for decades could finally face a court of law. The long-grieving families of numerous victims could hope to see closure. Perhaps

most importantly, this bill could assist the United States government in upholding justice, no matter how long overdue.

Again, we urge you to mark this important anniversary by scheduling a floor vote on H.R. 923/S. 535 this week. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

JOHN G. BRITTAIN,  
Chief Counsel.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
ON CIVIL RIGHTS,  
Washington, DC, June 4, 2007.

Hon. JOHN LEWIS,  
Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER J. DODD,  
Russell Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. KENNY C. HULSHOF,  
Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATRICK J. LEAHY,  
Russell Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR COLLEAGUES: On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition, with nearly 200 member organizations, we urge you to co-sponsor and support the bipartisan Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act (S. 535/H.R. 923). LCCR believes that it is imperative to put resources behind investigating and prosecuting those individuals involved with committing the unsolved civil rights era crimes.

The historic conviction of Edgar Ray Killen, for the 1964 deaths of three Mississippi Civil Rights workers, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, demonstrates how it is imperative that our nation bring murderers to justice, even if several decades have passed since these heinous crimes were committed. However, time is running out because the witnesses to these crimes are elderly.

S. 535/H.R. 923 will create two new offices to investigate and prosecute unsolved civil rights era murders. The Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office, a new FBI office headed by a Chief Investigator, will aggressively investigate pre-1970 murder cases in coordination with state and local law enforcement. The second office will be the Unsolved Crimes Section in the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ, which will focus specifically on prosecuting these cases. If a crime other than murder is discovered during the course of an inquiry, it will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

The bill authorizes \$11.5 million in annual appropriations: \$5 million for the Unsolved Crimes Section, \$5 million for the Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office and \$1.5 million for Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice to work with local communities in identifying these cases.

We hope that you co-sponsor and support the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act (S. 535/H.R. 923), which will bring to justice individuals who committed heinous crimes against civil rights activists and individual African Americans.

Sincerely,

WADE HENDERSON,  
President & CEO.  
NANCY ZIRKIN,  
Vice President/Director  
of Public Policy.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE,  
Washington, DC, June 5, 2007.

Re H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act.

Hon. JOHN LEWIS,  
U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. KENNY HULSHOF,  
U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMEN LEWIS AND HULSHOF: On behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized/grassroots civil rights organization, I would like to thank you for your sponsorship of and leadership behind H.R. 923 the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act. It is imperative to bring murderers of early civil rights activists to justice, to show the victims' families, as well as the Nation, that their sacrifices continue to outrage our Nation. The United States' government needs to commit the resources necessary to see that these heinous crimes intended to intimidate are resolved.

Witnesses and evidence to these crimes are aging and time is of the essence. As proven by the historic 2005 conviction of Edgar Ray Killen for the 1964 deaths of three Civil Rights workers, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, and the 1994 conviction of Byron De La Beckwith of the murder of Medgar Evers, more than 40 years earlier, there is no time limit on justice.

As you know, this bill creates two new offices within the Department of Justice whose sole purpose is to investigate these crimes. The Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office, a new FBI office headed by a Chief Investigator, will aggressively investigate pre-1970 cases in coordination with state and local law enforcement officials that resulted in death and remain unsolved. This office will do everything possible to make certain those who have committed these murders are brought to justice. The Unsolved Crimes Section, a new office within the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, will focus specifically on prosecuting these cases. If a crime other than murder is discovered during the course of an inquiry it will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. Lastly, the bill authorizes \$11.5 million in annual appropriations: \$5 million for the Unsolved Crimes Section, \$5 million for the Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Investigative Office and \$1.5 million for Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice to work with local communities in identifying these cases.

In order for our Nation to fully begin to move beyond these heinous crimes, the federal government needs to resolve these cases. Thank you again for your leadership on this bill; the NAACP deeply appreciates all you are doing on this issue. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments on the NAACP position, or if there is any way that I can be helpful to you as we move ahead with this legislation.

Sincerely,

HILARY O. SHELTON,  
Director.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is both humbling and an honor to speak on this bill after the distinguished gentleman, Congressman LEWIS, has just spoken. And I join my colleagues in strong support of H.R. 923, the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act OF 2007, and also compliment Chairman CONYERS for his leadership and work on bringing this bill forward.

It is important that Congress adopt this legislation as quickly as possible; 30 to 40 years have passed since many of these murders were committed.

Under normal circumstances, trying a murder case is difficult and costly. Add to that the loss or destruction of evidence, witnesses who have died or are unavailable, and numerous procedural hurdles, it only increases the difficulty and cost of prosecuting these crimes. But law enforcement officers and prosecutors are continuing to pursue these cases, and we applaud their efforts.

In 2006, the FBI directed all 56 of its field offices to comb through their own cold case files and assess how many could be prosecuted. The FBI identified roughly 100 such cases. Many cases are confined to a handful of field offices that must complete rigorous in-depth investigations before it's too late.

H.R. 923 directs the Attorney General to designate a deputy chief within the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice to coordinate the investigation and prosecution of unsolved civil rights-era murders. The bill also directs the Attorney General to designate a supervisory special agent within the Civil Rights Unit of the FBI to investigate these outstanding cases.

Mr. Speaker, most of these cases, if viable, will lack the requisite Federal nexus for prosecution by the Department of Justice. Yet, the Department and the FBI are able to provide valuable assistance to State prosecutors in their investigations. The Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act provides additional resources to fully assess these cases and bring the offenders to justice.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 7 minutes. The gentleman from Virginia controls 13 minutes.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield to the articulate gentlelady from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, a distinguished member of the committee, as much time as she may consume.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, allow me to take a moment of personal privilege to acknowledge the chairman of the full Judiciary Committee. It has only been a little over 6 months, or almost 6 months, that Mr. CONYERS has taken the realm of this august body. And I think if history is to be accurate, to recount the volcanic change that has come about on the life-changing legislative initiatives that have been able to be moved out of this committee, we recognize that hate should not be applauded, but it should be made illegal.

We have confronted the issues dealing with the creativity of America, addressing the questions of patent reform. We are looking closely at the idea of how do we find a balance on the issue of immigration. We are listening, we are learning, we are sympathetic. We are, in fact, what the Judiciary Committee, one of the oldest committees, was really intended to do: to listen to the grievances of people and be able to find relief.

Let me thank the ranking member of the subcommittee, the ranking member of the full committee, for they have partnered on a number of initiatives, and we have found, sometimes, common ground. Today I rise on that very shining example of a common ground.

Allow me to thank Congressman HULSHOF of Missouri for his passion and his commitment, and Mr. Sykes, who was a witness and who humbly said he was simply a public servant, someone who thought this idea was long in coming.

And so why we are here today is to talk about what many of you perceive as a television program called *Cold Cases*. I wish it was as simple as that. On that program, you do see the impact on families, but it is, in fact, a television program. Today, we speak of lives, lives long left on the dusty road of unsolved crimes, lives that are broken, torn, full of tears, looking for just a semblance of justice and hope in America. Maybe they were thinking of the words of Winston Churchill when he spoke to President Roosevelt in the dark ways of World War II, "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job." That is what this bill does today; it gives the tools to America's prosecutors to pick up the broken pieces of the civil rights movement.

In 1989, we put together a memorial for those who had lost their lives in the civil rights era. They lost their lives not because they were criminals, not because they were caught in an unfortunate accident, but they lost their lives because they were on the battlefield for justice. They were murdered because they were active in the civil rights movement. They were killed by organized hate groups as acts of terror aimed at intimidating blacks and civil rights activists of many different colors and religious backgrounds. Their death, like the death of Emmett Till, helped to galvanize the movement by demonstrating the brutality faced by African Americans in the South. It is an era of terror which all of us have come to stand against, proudly so, which makes you very proud to stand here as an American, frankly, the greatest country in the world. For we have traveled a blood-stained road, but yet as we've traveled it, there have been those who have tried to go back and be able to bring us forward, united, arm in arm together, sweeping across America talking about the injustices of the past, but looking forward to the future for our children.

And so this bill is in tribute to the likes of Rita Bender, a witness who was

brought before this committee. It was in recognition of the lives that we have heard of, Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney, buried deep in a mud pile. It was a testimony to JOHN LEWIS, who sits among us as an icon of conscience, who will tell you that in those muddy fields of Mississippi and Alabama, there are still skeletons that have yet been found. For many were killed, unnamed, and the relatives were too frightened to ever come forward. Maybe now, because this bill has a section in it on community relations, and I am hoping that as we provide oversight on this bill, we will increase those dollars from \$1.5 million to \$2 million or \$2.5 million, because one of the witnesses said they could not have prosecuted the case had it not been for the persistence and the heart and determination of the family members, having lived under the shadow of this sin for so long.

This bill does create a deputy chief in the Criminal Division of the Civil Rights Division. Many of us would have preferred a division, some separate fixture standing with the responsibility to have the hammer, if you will, of rightness. But we support this legislation, and we hope that as our chairman has been diligent and vigilant, as he looks forward, that we will ensure that that deputy chief does the right thing and provides a vigorous advocacy and prosecution of those unsolved crimes.

□ 1100

Let me, Mr. Speaker, just recount very briefly the moving testimony that was given of the witnesses. Let me home in, if I could, on Myrlie Evers Williams. Why? Because it is part of my psyche to have seen Medgar Evers folding down on his front yard as he was murdered going into his home to see his wife and his children.

Can you imagine the horror of waiting for daddy to come home, waiting for your husband to come home, the dinner on the table, the radio playing, the children making the kinds of pleasant noises that children make? Her husband was a warrior, but a gentle man, a man of peace, a man who was willing to sacrifice his own future so that he might bring justice to some.

Let me, Mr. Speaker, as I close, simply ask my colleagues to remember this past and go to the future as I ask for support for this legislation.

I thank you, JOHN LEWIS, and I thank you, JOHN CONYERS.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong of H.R. 923, the "Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act of 2007." This legislation, which I am proud to co-sponsor and strongly support, is intended to complete some of the Nation's most important unfinished business. And that is to solve some of the most depraved acts of violence against persons belonging to a racial group that was vulnerable, politically powerless, and innocent, and against those persons who risked life and limb to help them secure the rights promised in the Declaration of Independence and made real in the Constitution.

The Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act of 2007 is long overdue. I thank

our colleague, JOHN LEWIS of Georgia, who is widely recognized as the moral conscience of the House for sponsoring this legislation and I thank Chairmen CONYERS, SCOTT, and NADLER for their work in shepherding it through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989, the Civil Rights Memorial was dedicated in Montgomery, Alabama, the birthplace of the modern Civil Rights Movement. The Memorial honors the lives and memories of 40 martyrs who were slain during the movement from 1954 to 1968, including Emmett Till. But we know that many more people lost their lives to racial violence during that era. In fact, at the time the Memorial was dedicated, the killers of 13 of the 40 martyrs whose names are inscribed on the Memorial had not been prosecuted or convicted. In 10 of the 40 deaths, defendants were either acquitted by all-white juries or served only token prison sentences. We also know there are many cases that still cry out for justice. These unsolved crimes represent a continuing stain on our Nation's honor and mock its commitment to equal justice under law. The legislation before us is intended to help us remove that stain once and for all.

The 40 victims selected for inclusion in the Civil Rights Memorial fit at least one of three criteria: (1) they were murdered because they were active in the civil rights movement; (2) they were killed by organized hate groups as acts of terror aimed at intimidating blacks and civil rights activists; or, (3) their deaths, like the death of Emmett Till, helped to galvanize the movement by demonstrating the brutality faced by African Americans in the South. The 40 persons who fit the selection criteria ranged in age from 11 to 66. Seven were white, and 33 were black. They were students, farmers, ministers, truck drivers, a homemaker and a Nobel laureate.

But Mr. Speaker, there are many, many other victims besides the 40 who are remembered on the Memorial. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that its research uncovered approximately 75 other people who died violently between 1952 and 1968 under circumstances suggesting that they were victims of racial violence. For most of them the reason their names were not added to the Memorial is because not enough was known about the details surrounding their deaths. Sadly, the reason so little is known about these cases is because they were never fully investigated or, in some cases, law enforcement officials were involved in the killings or subsequent cover-ups. And because the killings of African Americans were often covered up or never seriously investigated, there is little reason to doubt that many slayings were never even recorded by the authorities.

The reason justice had not been served was the callous indifference, and often the criminal collusion, of many white law enforcement officials in the segregated South. There simply was no justice for African Americans during the civil rights era. The whole criminal justice system—from the police, to the prosecutors, to the juries, and to the judges—was perverted by racial bigotry. African Americans were routinely beaten, bombed and shot with impunity. Sometimes, the killers picked their victims on a whim. Sometimes, they targeted them for their activism. In other cases, prominent white citizens were involved and no consequences flowed. Herbert Lee of Liberty, Mississippi, for example, was shot in the head by a state legislator in broad daylight in 1961.



It is, of course, fitting and proper that H.R. 923 bears the name of Emmett Till, whose slaying in 1955 and his mother's decision to have an open casket at his funeral stirred the Nation's conscience and galvanized a generation of Americans to join the fight for equality. Sadly, hundreds of them were killed in that struggle, and many of the killers, like those of Emmett himself, were never successfully prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to learn that the Department of Justice strongly supports this legislation. It should. No government agency has done more through the years to protect and defend the civil rights of African Americans and other victims of injustice. I hope the DOJ's embrace of this legislation represents a rededication to its historic role of ensuring equal justice under law for all, even the poor, powerless, and vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, the heart of this legislation is sections 3 and 4. Section 3 establishes a Deputy Chief of the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division. Section 3 requires the Attorney General to designate a Deputy Chief of the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights division who will be responsible for coordinating the investigation and prosecution of violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred before December 31, 1969, and ended in death.

Section 3 also requires a study and report to Congress about the number of cases opened, the number of Federal prosecutions commenced, the number of cases of State and local prosecutions where the DOJ assisted, the number of cases that have been closed, and the number of open pending cases. The report shall be made not later than 6 months after the enactment of the Act.

Section 4 of the bill establishes a parallel component in the Civil Rights Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be headed by a Supervisory Special Agent designated by the Attorney General. This Supervisory Special Agent in the Civil Rights Unit is responsible for investigating violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred not later than December 31, 1969, and resulted in death. The Supervisory Special Agent should, where appropriate, coordinate investigations with State and local law enforcement officials.

Mr. Speaker, although I strongly support H.R. 923, I believe the bill would be even stronger if it incorporated three small but important amendments. First, I would recommend an amendment containing Congressional findings of fact that help explain to the nation and the world why the Congress was compelled to enact this vitally important legislation. We are enacting this legislation not because of who the perpetrators of these unsolved criminal violations of civil rights statutes are, but who we are, and who their victims were.

Mr. Speaker, over the past half century, the United States has made tremendous progress in overcoming the badges and vestiges of slavery. But this progress has been purchased at great cost. From Reconstruction through the modern Civil Rights Movement, heinous and depraved acts of violence were committed against persons belonging to a racial group that was innocent, vulnerable, and politically powerless, and also against those persons who risked life and limb to help them secure the rights promised in the Declaration of Independence and made real in the Constitution. Many of these crimes remain unsolved and no one has ever been held accountable.

Examples of unsolved cases include the 1968 "Orangeburg Massacre" at South Carolina State University where state police shot and killed three student protesters; the 1967 shooting death of Carrie Brumfield, whose body was found on a rural Louisiana road; the 1957 murder of Willie Joe Sanford, whose body was fished out of a creek in Hawkinsville, GA; the 1946 killing of a black couple, including a pregnant woman, who was pulled out of a car in Monroe, GA, and dragged down a wagon trail before being shot in front of 200 people.

These unsolved crimes represent a continuing stain on our Nation's honor and mock its commitment to equal justice under the law. Solving these cases is part of the unfinished work of America. President Kennedy said it so well 44 years ago, when he addressed the Nation on June 11, 1963: "this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free."

A second amendment I would recommend is the establishment of a specially created section within the Civil Rights Division with dedicated resources, personnel, and budgetary authority to investigate and prosecute notorious and neglected pre-1970 criminal violations of the civil rights statutes.

I believe that in designating the Deputy Chief required by this legislation, the Attorney General must also be required to delegate to the Deputy Chief authority over the necessary personnel and budgetary resources. The high hope of H.R. 923 is that it may help bring justice to those whom justice has been delayed for more than two generations. The Deputy Chief, therefore, has an awesome responsibility. If we are to expect positive results, it is incumbent upon us to provide the Deputy Chief the resources and authority needed to be successful. As Winston Churchill said to President Roosevelt during the dark days of 1940: "Give us the tools and we will finish the job!"

I am pleased, however, that the bill authorizes annual appropriations of \$10 million for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2017 for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting pre-1970 criminal violations of the civil rights statutes that resulted in a death. Similarly, I am pleased that the bill authorizes annual appropriations of \$1,500,000 to the Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice to provide technical assistance by bringing together law enforcement agencies and communities in the investigation of criminal violations of civil rights statutes.

My third amendment I would recommend is to increase the amount of this annual appropriation by \$500,000 to \$2 million and to make this funding source available to assist the families of victims in coping with the loss of a loved one through counseling and other support services, financial and otherwise. Such assistance must be available to the victim's families because in many cases the testimony of a family member may be indispensable to government investigators and prosecutors. I am particularly mindful that the witnesses testifying before the Judiciary Committee hearing affirmed their belief that the government's ability successfully to investigate and solve criminal civil rights violations would be greatly enhanced were assistance and support available to the victims' families.

Mr. Speaker, 44 years ago, Medgar Evers was murdered in Jackson, Mississippi; justice

would not be done in his case for more than twenty years. But that day was foretold because the evening before the death of Medgar Evers, on June 11, 1963, President John F. Kennedy addressed the Nation from the Oval Office on the state of race relations and civil rights in America. In his historic speech to the nation President Kennedy said:

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.

One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression. And this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

H.R. 923 is intended to help bring justice to those whom justice has been delayed for more than two generations. In doing so, this legislation will help this Nation fulfill its hopes and justify its boast that in America all persons live in freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this historic legislation and urge all Members to join me in voting for its passage.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. The fact that it is on suspension ought not to suggest that it is not an important bill. This bill is another in a number of bills that helps us heal some tremendous wounds in this country that go to the very essence of this country.

The Civil War, which caused more bloodshed than any other war that this Nation has been engaged in, is viewed as the tremendous act of expiation with the effort of this Nation to resolve, in its own mind, what it meant by every man and woman being equal.

That began the process that was followed through in a remarkable period of time during the last century called the civil rights revolution. But that revolution has not ended. There are still things that need to be done.

One of the terrible stains left on this Nation is the lack of justice done for those who suffered at the hands of people who believed this country would never recognize the rights of all; those who thought they could act with impunity to threaten, to terrorize, to murder other human beings merely because of the color of their skin.

I call this bill the "last chance bill," the "now or never bill." If we don't do this now, we will never have the chance to do it again, because those individuals who were involved in these crimes may not be around, and the family members of those who were victims of these crimes may not be around. We give ourselves a 10-year period of time in which we make a real effort to try and bring those to justice who should have been brought to justice a long time ago.

In the process, we say to all Americans, We understand the injustice that was done. We will make sure it is never repeated again. We will work to make this country a better place now and in the future.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank our subcommittee chairman, and I thank our full committee chairman and subcommittee ranking member as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. As it has been said, there exists in America an open sore that is yet to be remedied. I note that sometimes people see an amount of money that is being spent and say that is too much money. But in this case, there is an injustice that cries out for healing and for addressing.

When one American, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin, when one is struck down, then all of us are struck down. We need to address this. Now, I am not one of those who believes that we need to run forward and apologize for the sins of others that we didn't commit. But in this case, this bill addresses an injustice.

We have the power. We have the wherewithal and the ability to address this wrongdoing and this injustice. If we were not to take action, then this body would owe an apology, and I do not want to see that become necessary.

There are times that we hear moving testimony, and our heart is moved. But we know for the greater good of the country we must do something else. This is one of those cases in which we heard testimony that was very moving, and the heart is aligned with the head. This requires action. I appreciate the leadership moving this forward so that this injustice, this open sore, can finally be addressed.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, this bill, partnered by the gentleman from Georgia, a Democrat, and the gentleman from Missouri, a Republican, shows what we can do when we just pause and take a breath from the partisanship, the finger pointing, the negative attacks by the press and even some Members of our own body against this great body and join together to move this country forward.

I want to thank all of the individuals who worked on this bill, especially the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

At this time I would like to yield to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member, Mr. FORBES. I think this is an important step forward. I have been amazed by the congeniality and the cooperation that has been extended to me by all of the members of the House Judiciary Committee.

Things come around. This is a historic moment. It has been expressed with great articulateness by Members

on your side of the aisle, Mr. FORBES, as well as mine. But the witnesses on that day in Judiciary, and Myrlie Evers Williams stands out more than anyone else, were so amazing that I want everyone to go back and read the testimony that just electrified us all.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, the chairman should have the last word on this, and so he has.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNYDER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 923, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 923.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2764, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 498 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 498

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the

Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to reconsider with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 2764 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, my good friend, Mr. DIAZ-BALART. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 498.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

□ 1115

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 498 is an open rule that provides for consideration of H.R. 2764, the fiscal year 2008 appropriations for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and related programs.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen 15 State and Foreign Operations measures go through the House of Representatives in almost 16 years of serving in this body. Some bills were well-intentioned, but fell short of meeting America's critical needs and objectives, while others missed the target altogether.

Regarding today's State and Foreign Operations bill, I must commend Chairwoman LOWEY, Ranking Member WOLF, their respective staffs and the rest of the committee for coming together in a bipartisan fashion to craft this meaningful piece of legislation. Despite critical budget constraints and critical concerns, the bill is fiscally responsible and begins to address our Nation's foreign policy initiatives as they relate to fulfilling our commitments abroad.

In my capacity as chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and as a senior member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I believe I can speak to our country's need to restore world stability after years of following misguided and shortsighted foreign policy.